



Board of Trustees
Kurt Benirschke, M.D.
President

Lewis H. Silverberg
First Vice President
Yvonne W. Larsen
Second Vice President

Thompson Fetter
Secretary

Berit N. Durler
Treasurer

Richard D. Brooks
Bill L. Fox

Frederick A. Frye, M.D.

George L. Gildred

A. Eugene Trepte

Betty Jo F. Williams

David S. Woodruff, Ph. D.

Trustees Emeriti

Dallas Clark

Ivor deKirby

Lt. Gen. V.H. Krulak,
USMC (Ret.)

Lee S. Monroe, M.D.

John M. Thornton

Charles L. Bieler
Executive Director Emeritus

Douglas G. Myers
Executive Director

The Zoological Society of San Diego
September 6, 1999

Mayor Susan Golding and Members of the City Council
City of San Diego
202 C Street
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Mayor Golding and Members of the Council:

Re: San Diego Zoo Plan

As you are aware, the Zoological Society of San Diego has submitted an application to amend the Balboa Park Master Plan and the Central Mesa Precise Plan to provide for expansion of the World-Famous San Diego Zoo. The Planning Commission approved initiation of the process to review, analyze and possibly modify the proposed application on June 17, 1999.

Our animals need more space and Balboa Park needs more parking. These are the main reasons for our proposal. Without the room to develop larger and more natural enclosures to maintain a self-sustaining animal collection, San Diego's Zoo will cease being world-famous. The public has raised several issues, and we are willing to address them.

Since the Planning Commission initiation, representatives of the Zoological Society have been working with the City staff, including the City Manager's Office, Planning and Development Review, and the Park and Recreation Department, to devise a public review process that will address the concerns raised by the public. Representatives of the Zoological Society also have been meeting and speaking with community groups and interested citizens. As a result of these discussions during the last two months, the City has retained public policy facilitators to work with representatives from all parties that have expressed an interest in the Zoo's plan.

The Zoological Society has made a public commitment to work in good faith to insure an open, fair and informed planning process and build a collaborative plan. We realize that we can never satisfy everyone. We believe, however, that it is possible to devise a collaborative plan that will address the needs of

Mayor Susan Golding and Members of the City Council
September 6, 1999
Page 2 of 2

Balboa Park, the public and the San Diego Zoo. We hope to satisfy the majority of the interested parties.

I want to emphasize that during this public planning process, the Zoological Society will be continuing its efforts to maximize the use of its current premises. During the next five to six years we will be redeveloping the monkey cages (Heart of the Zoo III), the bear exhibit area, the cat exhibit area, and an area known as Sheep and Goat Canyon. One use considered for the Sheep and Goat Canyon project in the back of the Zoo adjacent to Highway 163 is to include employee parking, new maintenance areas and a consolidation of administrative offices.

We also recognize that multiple advisory boards and commissions want to participate in formulating the Zoo plan. During these early planning stages we hope to hold workshops with the various boards and commissions, including the Planning Commission, the Park and Recreation Board, the Historical Site Board, the Balboa Park Committee, and many others, to solicit input and opinions for the plan. We want everyone to be engaged in this process.

We are hopeful that this effort will dispel many of the rumors and alleviate the strong concerns that have been raised. The World-Famous San Diego Zoo has existed for more than eighty years. It will exist, we hope, for more than eighty more. We believe that the Zoological Society, the City and the public can work together to insure a great future for our San Diego Zoo.

As always, please do not hesitate to call me with any questions, comments or concerns.

Sincerely,

[SIGNED]

Kurt Benirschke, M.D.
President
Zoological Society of San Diego

cc: Members of the Planning Commission
Members of the Historical Site Board
Members of the Commission for Arts and Culture
Members of the Central Balboa Park Association
Members of the Balboa Park Committee
Members of the Park and Recreation Board
Penelope Culbreth-Graft, Assistant City Manager

Tim C. Rothans, City Manager Assistant
Stephen Haase, Planning and Development Review
William T. Griffith, Real Estate Assets Director
Marcia McLatchy, Park & Recreation Director
Lori Girard, Deputy City Attorney
Leisa Lukes, Development Project Manager